

United States Department of the Interior
National Park Service

**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES
REGISTRATION FORM**

This form is for use in nominating or requesting determinations for individual properties and districts. See instructions in How to Complete the National Register of Historic Places Registration Form (National Register Bulletin 16A). Complete each item by marking "x" in the appropriate box or by entering the information requested. If any item does not apply to the property being documented, enter "N/A" for "not applicable." For functions, architectural classification, materials, and areas of significance, enter only categories and subcategories from the instructions. Place additional entries and narrative items on continuation sheets (NPS Form 10-900a). Use a typewriter, word processor, or computer, to complete all items.

1. Staunton River Bridge Fortification (44HA0096)

historic name: Fort Hill

other names/site number:

2. Location

street & number 1035 Fort Hill Trail not for
publication city or town Randolph vicinity

state Virginia code VA county Halifax code Zip 23962-3107

3. State/Federal Agency Certification

As the designated authority under the National Historic Preservation Act of 1986, as amended, I hereby certify that this nomination request for determination of eligibility meets the documentation standards for registering properties in the National Register of Historic Places and meets the procedural and professional requirements set forth in 36 CFR Part 60. In my opinion, the property X meets does not meet the National Register Criteria. I recommend that this property be considered significant X nationally statewide locally. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of certifying official Date

Virginia Department of Historic Resources

State or Federal agency and bureau

In my opinion, the property meets does not meet the National Register criteria. (See continuation sheet for additional comments.)

Signature of commenting or other official Date

State or Federal agency and bureau

4. National Park Service Certification

I, hereby certify that this property is:

entered in the National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined eligible for the

National Register

See continuation sheet.

determined not eligible for the National Register

removed from the National Register

other (explain):

Signature of Keeper

Date of Action

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5. Classification

Ownership of Property (Check as many boxes as apply)

☐ private
☐ public-local
☒ public-State
☐ public-Federal

Category of Property (Check only one box)

___ building(s)
 ___ district
X site
 ___ structure
 ___ object

Number of Resources within Property

Contributing	Noncontributing
<u>2</u>	_____ buildings
_____	_____ sites
_____	_____ structures
_____	_____ objects
<u>2</u>	_____ Total

Number of contributing resources previously listed in the National Register _____

Name of related multiple property listing (Enter "N/A" if property is not part of a multiple property listing.)

N/A

6. Function or Use

Historic Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Defense</u>	Sub: <u>Arms Storage</u>
	<u>Fortification</u>
	<u>Military Facility</u>
	<u>Battle Site</u>
<u>Transportation</u>	<u>Rail-Related</u>

Current Functions (Enter categories from instructions)

Cat: <u>Landscape</u>	Sub: <u>Park</u>
<u>Recreation and Culture</u>	<u>Forest</u>
	<u>Outdoor Recreation</u>

7. Description**Architectural Classification** (Enter categories from instructions)Other

_____**Materials** (Enter categories from instructions)foundation Earth

roof _____

walls Earthother Rock and Backfill
_____**Narrative Description** (Describe the historic and current condition of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)**8. Statement of Significance****Applicable National Register Criteria** (Mark "x" in one or more boxes for the criteria qualifying the property for National Register listing)

- ☒ **A** Property is associated with events that have made a significant contribution to the broad patterns of our history.
- ☐ **B** Property is associated with the lives of persons significant in our past.
- ☒ **C** Property embodies the distinctive characteristics of a type, period, or method of construction or represents the work of a master, or possesses high artistic values, or represents a significant and distinguishable entity whose components lack individual distinction.
- ☒ **D** Property has yielded, or is likely to yield information important in prehistory or history.

Criteria Considerations (Mark "X" in all the boxes that apply.)

- ☐ **A** owned by a religious institution or used for religious purposes.
- ☐ **B** removed from its original location.
- ☐ **C** a birthplace or a grave.
- ☐ **D** a cemetery.
- ☐ **E** a reconstructed building, object or structure.
- ☐ **F** a commemorative property.
- ☐ **G** less than 50 years of age or achieved significance within the past 50 years.

Areas of Significance (Enter categories from instructions)Military, Engineering, and Archaeology

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Period of Significance Civil War Era

Significant Dates March 1864-Spring 1865

Significant Person (Complete if Criterion B is marked above)

Cultural Affiliation

Architect/Builder Confederate Soldiers under the direction of
Captain Benjamin Farnholt

Narrative Statement of Significance (Explain the significance of the property on one or more continuation sheets.)

9. Major Bibliographical References

Bibliography

(Cite the books, articles, and other sources used in preparing this form on one or more continuation sheets.)

Previous documentation on file (NPS)

- ☐ preliminary determination of individual listing (36 CFR 67) has been requested.
- ☐ previously listed in the National Register
- ☐ previously determined eligible by the National Register
- ☐ designated a National Historic Landmark
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Buildings Survey # _____
- ☐ recorded by Historic American Engineering Record # _____

Primary Location of Additional Data

- ☒ State Historic Preservation Office
- ☐ Other State agency
- ☐ Federal agency
- ☐ Local government
- ☒ University
- ☐ Other

Name of repository: _____

10. Geographical Data

Acreage of Property 6 acres

UTM References (Place additional UTM references on a continuation sheet)

Zone Easting Northing

Fort Hill (A) 17 E 704820 N 4083960, Confederate Artillery Battery (B) E 704560 N 4084120

☐ See continuation sheet.

Verbal Boundary Description (Describe the boundaries of the property on a continuation sheet.)

Boundary Justification (Explain why the boundaries were selected on a continuation sheet.)

11. Form Prepared By

name/title: Dr. Brian D. BatesOrganization: Longwood University date 04-01-03street & number: 201 High Street telephone (434)395-2875city or town Farmville state VA zip code 23909

Additional Documentation

Submit the following items with the completed form:

Continuation Sheets**Maps**

A USGS map (7.5 or 15 minute series) indicating the property's location.

A sketch map for historic districts and properties having large acreage or numerous resources.

Photographs

Representative black and white photographs of the property.

Additional items (Check with the SHPO or FPO for any additional items)

Property Owner

(Complete this item at the request of the SHPO or FPO.)

name Staunton River Battlefield State Parkstreet & number 1035 Fort Hill Trail telephone (434) 454-4312city or town Randolph state VA zip code 23962

Paperwork Reduction Act Statement: This information is being collected for applications to the National Register of Historic Places to nominate properties for listing or determine eligibility for listing, to list properties, and to amend existing listings. Response to this request is required to obtain a benefit in accordance with the National Historic Preservation Act, as amended (16 U.S.C. 470 et seq.).

Estimated Burden Statement: Public reporting burden for this form is estimated to average 18.1 hours per response including the time for reviewing instructions, gathering and maintaining data, and completing and reviewing the form. Direct comments regarding this burden estimate or any aspect of this form to the Chief, Administrative Services Division, National Park Service, P.O. Box 37127, Washington, DC 20013-7127; and the Office of Management and Budget, Paperwork Reductions Project (1024-0018), Washington, DC 20503.

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7. Description:

Summary Paragraph

Earthwork remnants of the Civil War era, visible south of the bridge across the Staunton River, include the Confederate star-shaped earthen fortification, referred to as Fort Hill, rifle trenches directly to the north and west of the fort, and a Confederate artillery battery (44HA0096). The location of former Confederate rifle trenches on the north bank of the Staunton River are no longer present due to erosion caused by the river. The four-span steel truss railroad bridge that you see today across the Staunton River replaced the covered wooden structure standing at the time of the Civil War. Archaeological investigations conducted in 1996 by the Longwood College Archaeology Field School concluded that the original fortification consisted of a northern fort wall parallel to the river measuring 24 inches high and 4 feet wide. They believe that the majority of the star-shaped fortification, the rifle trenches, and the artillery battery were built during the massive re-fortification process following the battle of Staunton River Bridge on June 25, 1864.

Background

Today remnants of the battle of Staunton River Bridge and the subsequent Confederate activity at the bridge include a star-shaped earthen fortification, Fort Hill, rifle trenches directly to the north and west of the fort, and a Confederate artillery battery 900 feet west of the fort (44HA0096). In 1902 the American Bridge Company of New York constructed the four-span steel truss railroad bridge that you see today across the Staunton River on the original stone piers.

In 1996, the Longwood College Archaeology Field School under the direction of Dr. Brian D. Bates conducted archaeological research at Fort Hill to gather information related to the fort's construction, occupation, and abandonment. A field strategy of pedestrian survey and close interval shovel test pits every 20

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feet was developed to provide evidence of occupation. A total of 101 STPs were excavated with only small brick fragments and some modern bottle glass being recovered. A few prehistoric artifacts, including flakes and one small piece of prehistoric ceramic, and several projectile point tips were recovered. Further augmentation of this effort was facilitated by a controlled metal detector survey of the area inside and immediately outside of the fortification.

Two units, measuring 5 feet by 20 feet each were excavated by hand in the moat, one along the north wall and another along the east wall. These were excavated to determine the amount of erosion that had accumulated in the moat. No more than 10 inches of erosion had accumulated, far less than anticipated. The limited erosion may be due to the fact that the fort was constructed during the last year of the war, so it was not kept clear of vegetation that holds back erosion as long as fortifications built earlier in the war.

An auger survey of the fort walls to record stratigraphic information was conducted to determine the building stages of the fort which is situated on a bluff 40 feet above the Staunton River. The present fort contains 7 gun platforms within earthen walls measuring nearly 10 feet above the interior of the fort and over 20 feet above the floor of the moat. The survey concluded that the fort used by the Confederates to repel the Union looked substantially different from the fort of today. The original fortification consisted primarily of a northern wall measuring 18 inches to 24 inches in height and about 4 feet in width. It is uncertain whether the rifle trench in front of the north wall or the bastion-work to the west of the fort along the railroad track was present on the day of the battle. The artillery battery on the south bank to the west of the railroad bed was most likely built following the battle when the rest of the main fort was constructed during the massive re-fortification process following the battle of June 25, 1864.

A depression measuring 8 feet in diameter near the fort entrance was suggestive of a well. The well was believed to contain a cannon deposited there when the fort was abandoned at the conclusion of the war. Indeed, one cannon was retrieved from the well in 1909. A magnetometer survey, conducted at the well by NAEVA, Inc., concluded that no large, or even small metallic object remains at the bottom of the wells 35+ feet depth.

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An evaluation of the destruction of the fort's 'bomb-proof' powder magazine was conducted. Two intersecting test units were placed within the powder magazine at right angles to one another. One unit measured 5 feet by 10 feet. The second unit measured 5 feet by 15 feet. A number of sixty-penny spikes were the only artifacts recovered from within and surrounding the powder magazine. All spikes were found randomly throughout the fill of the magazine with no apparent patterning. It is likely that these spikes were used to build the timber framework of the roof structure of the magazine. The complete lack of Civil War era artifacts was initially quite surprising until a modern aluminum beer can was encountered at a depth of 5 ½ feet. Evidently the entire magazine was impacted by relic hunting activity to a depth of 8 feet.

The battlefield that lies to the east of the railroad bed on the north side of the Staunton River was subject of a metal detector survey. Five acres of battlefield were surveyed producing only one expended cartridge. Apparently little remains of the battle that took place on this field in June 1864.

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8. Statement of Significance

Summary Paragraph

Lt. Gen. Ulysses S. Grant was determined to destroy the railroads that served Petersburg and supplied Gen. Robert E. Lee's troop. Brig. Gen. James H. Wilson and Brig Gen. August V. Kautz rode south along the Petersburg Railroad tearing up track as they went. On June 25 the raiders approached Roanoke Station, present-day Randolph, about a mile north of the bridge. Lee dispatched Maj. Gen. William H.F. 'Rooney' Lee's cavalry division to pursue and attack the raiders and wired Capt. Benjamin L. Farinholt, who guarded the bridge to warn him of the Union operation. Due to Farinholt's defense and Lee's timely arrival, Wilson and Kautz failed to burn the Staunton River Bridge. The railroad was repaired so rapidly that the raid was only partially successful. Today the key landmarks of the battle, the Confederate defensive earthworks, including Fort Hill, the associated rifle trenches, and the artillery battery, retain very good integrity. The archaeological investigations have provided information about the construction, occupation, and abandonment of Fort Hill that are not available in the historic accounts of the battle. Fort Hill meets the following two criteria established by the National Register of Historic Places:

Criterion A. The site is associated with events that made a significant contribution to the broad pattern of history, namely the defense of the key railroad supply line that allows for the continual defense of Richmond and Petersburg near the end of the Civil War.

Criterion C. The site is a rare example of a well-preserved Civil War star fortification associated with the defense of a railroad bridge.

Criterion D. The site has yielded, or is likely to yield, information, important in history, namely the stages of construction of a star earthwork Civil War fort, the occupation of that fort, the immediate and long-term effects of abandonment on an earthwork fort, and the further documentation of an event that is only briefly described in official records.

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Background

In June of 1864, Lee and his Army of Northern Virginia were engaged in a desperate defense of the city of Petersburg. Lee depended on a steady flow of supplies from the west and south, via the railroads. Grant was determined to destroy the railroads, forcing Lee to abandon Petersburg. On June 22 Wilson and Kautz left Petersburg with over 5,000 cavalry troops and 16 pieces of artillery. As they moved west 'Rooney' Lee (son of Robert E. Lee) and his cavalry pursued the invading troops. During the first three days of the raid, 60 miles of track were torn up, and two trains and several railroad stations were burned.

On June 23 Farinholt, defending the bridge with a battalion of 296 reserves, received word from Gen. Robert E. Lee that a large detachment of enemy cavalry was heading to destroy the bridge. Though volunteers had bolstered his numbers, Farinholt was still badly outnumbered. He had only a few artillery pieces in the fort and positioned many of his men behind hastily constructed rifle trenches north of the bridge.

On June 25 the Union cavalry arrived at Roanoke Station. Kautz's cavalry troops dismounted and formed up to cross the open fields toward the bridge. Having finally reached a shallow drainage ditch some 200 yards north of the bridge, the Union troop organized for what was to be the first of four charges, all of them repulsed by the Confederate forces. That evening the Union troops retreated to the depot. Just before the battle, 'Rooney' Lee's cavalry division appeared north of the depot and skirmished with Wilson's rear guard. That night Wilson and Kautz decided to abandon their mission and rode east toward Christianville (now Chase City).

Because of Farinholt's defense and Lee's timely arrival, Wilson and Kautz failed to destroy the Staunton River Bridge. The railroad tracks were repaired so quickly that the raid was considered only partially successful.

The well-preserved earthworks of Fort Hill, the associated rifle trenches, and the separate artillery battery, all on the south side of the Staunton River, serve to document this important event. Recent archaeological investigation has shed light on the earthwork construction sequence at the defense of the

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Staunton River Bridge. The evidence suggests that the much of the present-day height of the star fort, ten feet above the interior of the fort and over twenty feet above the floor of the moat, with its seven gun platforms was built after the June 25, 1864 battle.

Future archaeological investigations here could enhance our knowledge of the events leading up to June 25, 1864, the defense of the Staunton River Bridge, the refortification and expansion of the defenses, and the effect of abandonment, erosion, and indiscriminate digging/collecting on Civil War earthworks and battlefields.

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1. Bibliography

Cummins, A.B.

1961 *The Wilson-Kautz Raid*. Blackstone, Virginia. Nottoway Publishing Co.

Headspeth, W. Carroll.

1976 *Battle of Staunton River Bridge*. South Boston, Virginia. News and Record.

Bates, Brian D.

2000 *A Report on the Phase II Evaluation of Staunton River Battlefield State Park: 1996-2000*.
Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Longwood College, Farmville, Virginia.

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2. Geographical Data: Boundary Justification

The boundaries of the Staunton River Bridge Fortification (44HA0096) nomination encloses:
(A) the 550 foot east-west by 400 foot north-south Fort Hill earthwork located on the edge of a high bluff on the south bank of the Staunton River in Halifax County, and (B) the Confederate artillery battery marked by the low earthwork nine hundred feet north-west of Fort Hill along the edge of a high bluff.

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10. Geographical Data: Verbal Boundary Description

Staunton River Bridge Fortification (44HA0096) is located 350 feet above sea level on the south bank of the Staunton River in Halifax County, Virginia. This earthen fortification is faced on the north and east by the bluff that drops down to the Staunton River. The former Southern Railroad ran between Fort Hill and the artillery battery. Route 800 (Fort Hill Trail) borders, in part, the south side of the fortified area. The nominated area is approximately 400 feet north-south by 1,400 feet east-west and encompasses 12.85 acres. The fortification is situated on land now owned by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, Division of State Parks (DCR) and is officially named Staunton River Battlefield State Park.

List of Illustrations

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Map of Staunton River Battlefield State Park

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Map of Staunton River Battlefield area

Illustration 3 of 8

Plan map of main earthwork fortification

Illustration 4 of 8

View southeast of main earthwork fortification

Illustration 5 of 8

View east of main earthwork fortification

Illustration 6 of 8

View north of interior of main earthwork fortification

Illustration 7 of 8

View south of the excavation of the powder magazine in the main earthwork fortification

Illustration 8 of 8

View north of the artillery placement